

PUBLIC SCOPING NOTICE
Environmental Assessment for the
Sleeping Rainbow Ranch Adaptive Reuse Development Project
September 19, 2002

Background

In 1996, Utah Valley State College (UVSC) began looking for a facility that would provide educational and research opportunities in Southern Utah to students and faculty. During this same time, the National Park Service was considering various options for the Sleeping Rainbow Ranch, a 375-acre property within the boundaries of Capitol Reef National Park.

One option, suggested by UVSC and incorporated into the Park's General Management Plan (GMP), was to rehabilitate Sleeping Rainbow Ranch (Ranch) and use it for educational and research purposes. This option was evaluated in a Development Concept Plan and was approved by the National Park Service in the Park's GMP/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), approved in March 2000. Under a General Agreement developed between the National Park Service and UVSC, educational access would be provided to students and faculty from across the nation while protecting the natural beauty and environment of the Sleeping Rainbow Ranch. UVSC, in cooperation with park managers, would be responsible for rehabilitating the Ranch and operating it as a higher education field station.

As identified in the 2000 GMP/EIS, the National Park Service has determined that the most appropriate use of the Sleeping Rainbow Ranch is to rehabilitate the Ranch for educational use. The National Park Service is now determining the most appropriate means of initiating rehabilitation and operation of this educational facility.

Proposed Project

The Proposed Project would involve rehabilitation of buildings and facilities associated with the Ranch headquarters area, as well as construction of additional structures, and operating the property as a long-term educational facility. Three of the four main buildings (Utility Building, Guest House, and Dormitory/Bunkhouse) would be rehabilitated, while the remaining main building (Main Lodge) would be razed and replaced with a new building. One new structure (Laboratory) would be erected. These facilities would be collectively used as classroom, educational laboratories, and living quarters. These buildings are currently in a state of disrepair and would be rehabilitated and/or reconstructed to bring them up to state codes and improve educational opportunities. In addition, a naked-eye observatory and contemporary observatory, outdoor classroom, ground (and possibly roof) installed solar arrays, and an area to house alternative power facilities are proposed for various educational purposes. Travel routes (roads and trails) would be designated, and parking at the Ranch would

be limited to a designated parking area adjacent to the ranch headquarters. Water would be provided by a nearby existing well, and would be transported to the Ranch by a waterline that would be routed beneath an existing roadway. A new pump house would be constructed, and the well pump would be operated by a propane-powered generator located at the well site. New septic systems would be installed, and propane-powered generators would provide supplemental electricity beyond that produced by the solar arrays. The completed facility, intended for year-round availability, would accommodate daytime use by as many as 40 visitors, and overnight use by as many as 20 visitors.

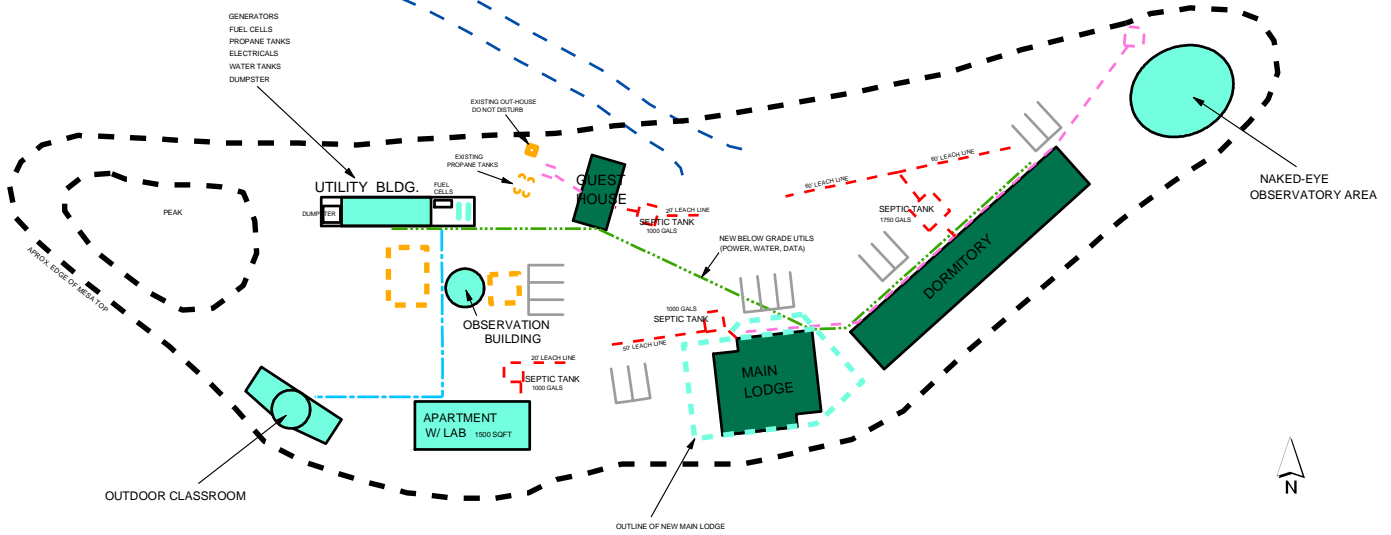
Invitation for Public Comments

Since the Proposed Project involves an action of the Federal Government that may affect the natural or human environments associated with the Ranch, an analysis specified by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is required. The NEPA process is combined with an evaluation of potential effects on historic properties, required by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Part of these analyses involves collecting public comments from federal, state, and local agencies, and other individuals or groups who may be interested in or affected by the proposed project. These comments are sought prior to the initiation of formal analysis and the information will be used in preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA). Comments will be accepted during a 30-day comment period beginning September 19, 2002, and should be received by the Park no later than October 19, 2002. It is very important that those interested in this proposed project submit their comments before the close of the 30-day comment period so that substantive comments can be meaningfully considered. The National Park Service will consider submitted comments, issue an EA in the winter of 2002, and again solicit comments from the public. Notifications regarding public scoping, availability of the EA, and any additional information concerning the public involvement for this project will be published in local newspapers prior to the beginning of comment periods.

To assist the National Park Service in identifying and considering issues and concerns associated with the proposed project, comments should be as specific as possible. Comments may be sent electronically to CARE_SleepingRainbowEA@nps.gov or may be mailed to:

Superintendent
Capitol Reef National Park
HC 70, Box 15
Torrey, UT 84775

Proposed Site Utility Plan



Septic System

ALL SEPTIC TANKS SHOWN ARE APPROXIMATE LOCATIONS. FINAL LOCATION & CONNECTIONS TO BE DETERMINED TO COMPLIED WITH PLUMBING, COUNTY & PARKS CODES. LEACH LINE MIN. LENGTHS ARE AS SHOWN ON PLAN. PROVIDE 5' OF GRAVEL UNDER ALL LEACH LINES (ABSORPTION TRENCH). LEACH LINES TO BE 50' MIN. FROM ANY DROP-OFFS OR LEDGES. INSTALL NEW CONCRETE PAD (MATCH SURROUNDING COLOR PER PARK STD.) OVER ALL TANKS SO VEHICLES MAY BE DRIVEN OVER WITHOUT

Project Area

Sleeping Rainbow Ranch Adaptive Reuse Development Project



Base map taken from Golden Throne, UT digital orthophoto quadrangle and USGS 7.5 minute topographic quadrangle.

SWCA

Date: 9-17-2002
Project: 6117-001
Source: proj_area2

